

Lead Reduction Act Update – January 1, 2014

In January 2011, President Barack Obama signed into law *The Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act* (Lead Reduction Act), which amends Section 1417 of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The Lead Reduction Act changes the definition of “lead-free” from 8.0 percent to 0.25 percent. **The Lead Reduction Act takes effect on January 4, 2014 and requires new pipes, pipe fittings, plumbing fittings, and fixtures to be “lead free.”**

Although the Massachusetts Drinking Water Program (MassDEP DWP) lacks the authority to interpret or change EPA’s position on the Lead Reduction Act, we want to assist public water systems comply with its requirements. Based on guidance from EPA, MassDEP offers the following information:

1. **Existing Stock of Materials:** The Lead Reduction Act prohibits the use of “any pipe, or plumbing fitting or fixture, any solder, or any flux, in the installation or repair of any public water system... providing water for human consumption that is not lead free.” Therefore, if any public water system carries existing stock of materials that does meet the new definition of “lead free”, then such materials may not be used after January 4, 2014.
2. **Hydrants:** EPA initially indicated that hydrants would not be exempt and therefore any new hydrant that is not “lead free” could not be installed after January 4, 2014. However, AWWA and others continued working with EPA on this issue. The result is the Community Fire Safety Act of 2013, which will exempt hydrants. The bill passed the House on December 2, 2013 and the Senate on December 17, 2013. It is currently waiting for the President’s signature to be enacted.
3. **Water Meter Change-out/Repair:** EPA has indicated that new meters, as well as replacement parts installed into existing meters, installed after January 4, 2014 must meet the new definition of “lead free.”
4. **Seasonal Water Meters:** EPA has indicated that seasonal meters removed from service in the fall of 2013 may be placed back into service in the spring of 2014, but they must go back in the same location.

Additional guidance from EPA on the Lead Reduction Act for public water systems can be found at: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/lead/index.cfm>.